

ningly skewed, and fits in quite nicely with Soviet propaganda campaigns against the United States. What is astonishing is that he would concentrate so much rhetorical firepower against U.S. officials over this incident, while only lightly rapping the Soviets. Indeed, he can barely bring himself to judge the Kremlin harshly, and when he does so, he invariably comes up with dozens of reasons to excuse their most cruel and barbarous actions.

Even if U.S. officials did, in fact, "overreact" or even if the Soviets, by some quirk, thought that KAL Flight 007 was a "reconnaissance" craft, surely the Soviets—not U.S. officials—deserve to be the major focus of severe condemnation, not only for having destroyed (mistakenly or not) an unarmed civilian airliner, but for failing to apologize for this terrible incident (indeed, they said they would do it again), for refusing to compensate the relatives of the victims, for declining to cooperate with international agencies in investigating the incident, for continuing their outrageous lying that Flight 007 was on a military spy mission.

Hersh's ready acceptance of Soviet excuses for the episode, his willingness to believe their goodwill and our mendaciousness, is undoubtedly at least part of the reason that the Soviets invited him to Moscow "in the hope," as Hersh explains things, "that they could persuade me, as a journalist, to investigate the Central Intelligence Agency's role in the shootdown."

While Hersh admits there's no proof of this, and that the Soviets offered him none, he nonetheless accepts the premise that they seriously believe the lie, and writes his book in such a way that the Kremlin can blame *this* country for distorted intelligence reports, provocative reconnaissance missions, and deliberate efforts to slander a by and large innocent Soviet Union.

EXCERPTED